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Introduction



This informational booklet was designed to guide you through talking to your teen about “touchy” subjects such as sex and pregnancy. About 40 percent of American teenage girls get pregnant before the age of 20.

In addition, every year 3 million teens - about 1 in 4 sexually active teens - will be infected with a sexually transmitted disease (STD). With statistics such as these, it is very important to open the communication lines with your child early so that when they have questions about these topics they can feel comfortable looking to you for the answers.

As a parent, communication and connectedness may be the best ways you can help. According to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, adolescents who discussed sexuality topics with a parent were more likely to delay sexual intercourse and remain abstinent.



Communication Barriers and Solutions

Below are some examples of **Door Slammers**, followed by better responses that will help to open the doors of good communication. In addition, these good communication skills will help you have more successful everyday conversations with your child - no matter what you are discussing. Give them a try! You will definitely see some positive results.

Door Slammers

"You are too young to understand."

"If you say that again, I'll..."

"That's none of your business."

"I don't care what your friends are doing!"

"We'll talk about that when you need to know."

"That's just for boys (girls)"

"Why are you asking me that?"

Door Openers

"What do you think?"

"Do you know what that means?"

"Mom and Dad are having some special time together, we will definitely talk about this later though."

"This is why I feel that way..."

"That's a good question."

"I don't know, but I'll find out"



Tips for Educating Your Child

1. Set good examples that show your kids how your lives are enriched by your values.
2. Build their self-esteem- credit them for their talents, personalities, and accomplishments.
3. Respect their need for privacy as much as you value your own.

4. Take advantage of “teachable moments.” A friend’s pregnancy, neighborhood gossip, movies or TV shows can help start a conversation.
5. Be an “askable” parent by answering questions honestly and accurately.
6. Be clear about your own feeling and values.
7. Be proactive not reactive, empower your child with appropriate knowledge; don’t paralyze them with fear and misinformation.
8. Remember your own adolescence and your needs and fears, curiosity, and feelings and concerns.
9. Get to know your child’s world.
10. Let your child know that you value education highly. Encourage your child to set high expectations about their school performance and support them or provide the extra guidance if needed.



Resource: University of California, San Francisco

Tips for Communicating With Your Child

Tell It Like it Is. Avoid fables, vague explanations and untruths when talking about issues of sexuality, puberty, conception and birth.

Talk About Humans. It’s confusing to talk only about animals when your child wants to know about people.

Listen to Your Child - Show Your Interest. When your child approaches you with a question or concern, stop and listen. Move toward the child or onto his/her level. Contain immediate reactions (see “door slammers” above) while you explore what your child is trying to say.

Give Simple Explanations. Use appropriate names for parts and functions of the body. Children need a language to use when talking about their questions, comments and concerns.

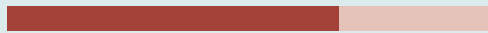
Be Patient. Expect the same questions and concerns to resurface. Children have difficulty grasping some information. They often need repeated assurances about the changes they are experiencing.

Get to Know Your Child's Environment. The current jokes, the TV shows, the music they listen to, the friends they have — these will provide endless opportunities to discuss sexuality issues.

Introduce the Topic. Bringing up issues from time to time will give the message that you are open to and available to discuss sexuality. Your child may be put off — (“Oh Dad!” or “Whatever?!”), but that doesn’t necessarily mean that he or she knows it all or doesn’t want to talk.

Keep The Door Open. Let your child know that you are available for other conversations or questions about this topic. Assure them that you won’t judge them.

Source: Adapted from *The Worst Advice You Can Give to a Kid About Sex...(nothing!)* Maryland Governor’s Council on Adolescent Pregnancy



Discussion Topics

The following are some discussion topics, which lend to expressing and exploring your values, morals and beliefs.

1. Not getting pregnant or getting someone pregnant out of marriage.
2. Being a virgin at marriage.
3. Not contracting a sexually transmitted disease.
4. Receiving quality sex education from school or church.
5. Not getting hurt as the result of a sexual relationship.
6. Having open communication between my child and myself about sex.
7. Not exploiting another person sexually.

8. Not being influenced by peer pressure to have sex.

Source: *The Maryland Governor's Council on Adolescent Pregnancy (GCAP) of the Governor's Office for Children, Youth and Family.*



Common Questions From Teenagers

It is important that you prepare yourself to answer some difficult questions that your teen might have. Take the time to think over what types of answers and messages you want to portray to your child when dealing with these hard to deal with topics. If you would like to find out more information on these questions and others like them there is a resource guide to help you out located at the back of this packet.

Idaho Statistics

- o Every day in Idaho, 3 girls under the age of 18 become pregnant.
- o In Idaho, in the year 2001, 2,229 babies were born to teens under the age of 19. Of those, 604 births were to girls 15-17 years old while 21 were to girls ages 10-14 years (Idaho Vital Statistics, 2000).
- o 80% of teen pregnancies are conceived under the influence of drugs and alcohol (National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy).

Getting Involved

It has been proven time and time again that children who are involved in some extra curricular activities outside of school are at a greatly decreased risk for teen pregnancy and all sorts of other troubles that often face teens.

Getting your child involved in some sort of organization, after school job, sport, church group, or hobby is a great way to not only keep them busy,

but also give them an increased sense of self-esteem. Pick up a copy of your local Boise Family Directory or the Yellow Pages to find many options for some programs that are offered around the Boise area. The following are just a few ideas that you and your child may be interested in:

- After School Programs
- Art Classes
- Babysitting Classes
- Camps
- Crafts/Hobbies
- Dance
- Drama/Theater
- Gymnastics/Cheerleading
- Martial Arts
- Flyfishing
- Hiking
- Home Repair
- Soccer
- Skating
- Skiing and Snowboarding
- Sports Associations
- Swimming Lessons
- Teen Support and Services
- Youth Groups
- Volunteer Opportunities



Resources

Here is a list of local organizations, videos, books, and web sites that may be of some help. These resources can put you in touch with additional information on subject matters dealing with some of the issues that face teens and also how to better communicate with your teen. Because of the diversity within these resources, we recommend that you review the materials prior to sharing them with your kids.

Local Programs

Central District Health Department
707 N. Armstrong Pl Boise 83704
327-7460

Idaho Careline
211 or 1-800-926-2588

Walk'n the Talk
395-0900

Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center (Women's Center)
900 N. Liberty
367-7380



Southwest District Health
465-8400 ext. 44

Videos

Teen-Parent Communication

Power of Choice:
Communicating With Your Parents

Just For Me: My Choice

I Don't Know What To Do: Decision Making Skills

Yes? No? Maybe?

I'm Not Everybody!

Abstinence, it's the right choice

Know How: Abstinence — encourages teens to postpone sexual involvement.

Real People: Teens Who Choose Abstinence



Books

Changing Bodies, Changing Lives 3rd Edition
by Ruth Bell

Sex Ed. Growing Up, Relationships and Sex

by Dr. Miriam Stoppard

Smart Sex

by Jessica Vitkus and Marjorie Ingall

Girl Stuff. A Survival Guide to Growing Up.

By Margaret Blackstone and Elissa Harden

It's Perfectly Normal

by Robie Harris

My Self for Girls

by Lynda & Area Madaras

I Kissed Dating Goodbye

by Joshua Harris

When Sex is the Subject; Attitudes and Answers for Young People

by Pamela Wilson

The " Go Ask Alice" Book of Answers.

A guide to good physical, sexual and emotional health by Columbia University's Health Education Program. Henry Holt and Co, Inc. 1998

Asking About Sex and Growing Up

by Joanna Cole

What's Happening to My Body? A Book for Boys

by Lynda Madaras

Five Hundred Questions Kids Ask About Sex (and Some of the Answers)

by Frances Younger

How You Were Born

by Joanna Cole

What's Happening to My Body? A Book for Girls

by Lynda Madaras

It's Perfectly Normal: Growing Up, Changing Bodies, Sex and Sexual Health

by Robie Harris

Sex Stuff for Kids 7-17

by Carol Marsh

Sexual Development of Young Children

by Virginia Lively & Edwin Lively

Risky Times: How to Be AIDS- Smart and Stay Healthy

by Jeanne Blake

Sex Education Dictionary for Today's Teens and Pre-Teens

by Dean Hoch & Nancy Hoch

Bellybuttons are Navels

by Mark Schoen

Where Do Babies Come From?

by Susan Meredith & Susan Mayes

How Sex Works

by Elizabeth Fenwick & Richard Walker

Period

by JoAnn Gardner-Louian, Bonnie Lopez & Maria Quackenbush

Red Light, Green Light Preventing Teen Pregnancy

by Janet Ollilia Colberg

Now What Do I Do?

by Robert Selverstone, Ph.D.

What's Going on Down There: Answers to Questions Boys Find Hard to Ask

by Karen Gravelle

Talk About Sex: A Booklet for Young People

by Patti Britton & Carolyn Patierno

Caution: Do Not Open Until Puberty!

An Introduction to Sexuality for Young Adults with Disabilities

by Rick Enright

Keep Talking: A Mother Daughter Guide to the Pre-Teen Years

by Lynda Madison Ph. D.

Confident Kids – I Always, Always Have Choices

by J. Hall

How To Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk

by Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish

How To Talk So Kids Can Learn: At Home & In School

by Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish

Between Parents and Child: For Parents To Communicate With Their Children

by Dr. Haim and G. Ginott

Happiness Through Choice

by Robin R. Reed

Sex, Lies, and the Truth

by Focus on the Family

Making a Love That Lasts

by Jacob Aranza

Teen Tips: A Practical Guide for Parents with Kids 11-19

by Tom McMahon

258 Great Dates While You Wait

by Greg Johnson

Web Sites

www.cfoc.org

www.teenpregnancy.org

www.4girls.com

www.state.id.us/teenpregnancy

www.ohsu.edu/women/teen/

<http://teenspeak.tripod.com>



www.accessidaho

www.idahocareline.org

www.notmenotnow.org

